

Strangers Nowhere in the World?

Legacies of Early Modern Cosmopolitanism

Lecture Series of the Frühneuzeit-Zentrum Potsdam (FNZ)
Winter 2016/2017

According to its ironic opening paragraph, Immanuel Kant's cosmopolitan project in *Zum ewigen Frieden* (1795) took its title, not in fact from optimistic hopes for a world without wars, but from the sign of an inn located next to a graveyard. Kant's tavern sign not only pointed to human finitude as an anthropological universal, but also implied a warning about the dangers inherent in Enlightenment conceptions of world citizenship – dangers all too apparent at a time when, for instance, members of the international group honored in 1792 as cosmopolitan “benefactors of humanity” had recently been imprisoned and executed during the French terror.

The lecture series is designed to illuminate the tensions within early modern approaches to a cosmopolitanism whose ambivalent legacies decisively shaped the revolutionary period and in part remain with us today. Papers will examine a variety of discourses and practices, uncovering heterogeneous modes of coming to terms with the increasingly global mobility of persons, goods, and ideas in early modernity. They will focus both on cosmopolitan elites composed of travelers, merchants, missionaries, masons, and army officers and on less conspicuous forms of cosmopolitanism among sailors, slaves, trappers, migrants, and refugees.

The lectures are organized by the Frühneuzeitzentrum (FNZ) in cooperation with the Department of English and American Studies, the Department of Jewish Studies and Religious Studies, and the Department of German Studies. In addition, the Research Training Group “Minor Cosmopolitanisms” has opened its inaugural event to participants in the lecture series. All lectures are free and open to the public and will take place at the University of Potsdam, Campus Neues Palais.

For more information visit:

www.uni-potsdam.de/fnz-cosmopolitanism

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